

# STATE OF COLORADO

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Jane E. Norton  
Lieutenant Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## NORTON CONVENES FIRST COMMITTEE MEETING TO PROMOTE ADOPTION IN COLORADO

(Denver) –Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton today convened the inaugural meeting of the Lieutenant Governor’s *Committee to Promote Adoption*. Highlighted by Governor Bill Owens in the State of the State address yesterday, the committee will be working to secure homes for the more than 700 Colorado children now available for adoption.

“Colorado has a pressing need to find caring, life-long families for every single one of these deserving children,” said Norton. “Governor Owens and I believe it is critical that we focus on helping some of our most vulnerable children through improving the adoption process.”

The *Committee to Promote Adoption* has been charged with a number of important responsibilities, which include a review of the current system of adoption in Colorado; providing prospective adoptive families with statewide, centralized assistance regarding the adoption process; and to develop a public relations and educational campaign for the promotion of adoption.

As chair of the new committee, Norton announced the appointed members of this statewide effort and spoke on the need to achieve a successful, life-long placement for every one of Colorado’s 708 “waiting” children. The official number of children waiting for adoption is determined by the TRAILS Database, which is maintained by the Colorado Department of Human Services.

Members were appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and will serve on the committee for six months with recommendations and findings scheduled to be released in July of 2004.

The appointed members of the *Committee to Promote Adoption* are:

**Ms. Virginia Appel** – Executive Director for Adoption Alliance

**Mr. Terry Bagby** – Co-Chair and adoptive parent

**Dr. Frank Bennett** – Director of Family Services at Aurora Mental Health Center and adoptive parent

**The Honorable Brian Boatright** – District Court Judge for Jefferson County and adoptive parent

**Dr. Dixie Davis** – Executive Director of The Adoption Exchange

**Mr. Brian Field** – Director of Arapahoe County Social Services

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**The Honorable David Furman** – Denver District Court Magistrate  
**Ms. Marva Livingston Hammons** – Executive Director for the Colorado Department of Human Services  
**The Honorable Ted Harvey** – Colorado State Representative  
**The Honorable Dave Long** – Weld County Commissioner  
**Ms. Marilyn Neihart** – Director of Fort Morgan County Social Services  
**Ms. Alice Spencer** – Family Resource Coordinator at Access Behavioral Care and adoptive parent  
**Ms. Maren Stewart** – Vice President of External Affairs at Children’s Hospital and adoptive parent  
**The Honorable John Suthers** – United States Attorney for the District of Colorado and adoptee  
**Ms. Elaine Torres** – Manager of Community Affairs for NEWS 4  
**Ms. Gwen White** – Foster Care Program Director for Lutheran Family Services of Colorado

*Ex-Officio Members*

**Ms. Sandy Blaylock** – Chief of Staff and Adoption Lead for the Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
**Mr. Chris Castilian** – Director of the Governor’s Office of Policy & Initiatives  
**Mr. Stephen Heiling** – Deputy Director for the Office of Child and Family Services  
**Ms. Barbara Prehmus** – External/Legislative Liason Director for the Colorado Dept. of Health Care,  
Policy & Finance

*Committee Support*

**Ms. Mercelle Seale-Pierce** – Communications Associate at Daniels Fund

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